

EVANGELISATION BY THE LOCAL CHURCH

Dr. Saphir Athyal

Did you know that St. Augustine, the great theologian of the church, didn't want to be a pastor or a bishop? But he was a very good preacher. So whenever he was asked to preach, he would go to a church that had a pastor. He would never go to a church without a pastor because he was afraid that they would call him to be a pastor. He wanted to spend his time meditating, praying in his monastery, and writing theology. One day he made the mistake of going to a place that did not have a pastor, Hypo. They asked him to be the pastor. Hearing the voice of God, he stayed there for decades. But his great desire in life was to spend time with God. After his activity time was over he was sick, and knew he couldn't minister further. He said, "Let me be alone. Let me be doing what I always wanted to do in my life. Let me spend my last few days fulfilling my ambition." So they left him alone and he spent the last few days in sweet communion with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

But let me tell you something. Don't wait until you retire to become a prayer warrior. Because if you wait till then, your retirement is going to be a very traumatic one. You will never become a prayer warrior then if you are not a prayer warrior now.

In conclusion, let me say that Paul was saddened later by Mark's defection. You remember how Mark left Paul. Earlier I said that encouragers are easily gladdened but encouragers are also easily saddened because people in whom they have invested may not live up to their potential. But Barnabas never gave up on Mark. He continued to defend him and even at the cost of his partnership with Paul. Thank God, the two were reconciled later on and it seems as if they were partners in their later ministry. The coward, Mark, became a fearless person and Egypt became the philosophical centre of the next generations of Christians because of him. It was a big challenge for one who was a coward. So Barnabas was a good man and an encourager. As a compliment, the greatest thing about Barnabas was Paul and Mark. May we also seek those qualities of Barnabas. May we also make it our goal to push others forward.

Today was a very long and heavy day for us. Most of us have gone for the excursion trip and came back very tired, and I am the third speaker and it is not easy. In one meeting when there were three speakers, the person who led in the opening prayer prayed, "O Lord, bless the first speaker and speak through him. Lord, take in your large big hand the second speaker and make him an instrument of blessing for us and Lord, have mercy upon the third speaker." I need God's mercy.

Our theme for ALCOE III is UNTIL ALL ASIA HEARS THE WORD OF THE LORD. Acts 19 is from where this phrase is taken. The word Asia here refers to a small section of the western part of what we today call Turkey. The passage says how all Asia heard the Gospel. Today Asia is different. Asia has become gigantically big and therefore the task of letting all Asia hear has become an immense task. The number of people who have not heard the Gospel has rapidly increased. When Jesus gave the commission, "Go ye into all the world," nobody knew exactly how many people were in the world. But there is general agreement that there were probably 250 million people in all the world. It took 1,500 years, until the time of Martin Luther, for that population to double to 500 million for the whole world. It took another 250 years, until the time of William Carey whom we sometimes call the "Father of modern mission," when the world population became one billion. But within another 100 years, at the time of the Edinburgh Conference, probably the first major conference on World Evangelisation, the world population became 2 billion and now 80 years after that, more than 5.5 billion or 5,500 million people. How many times more people to be reached than when Jesus gave the commandment!

What does whole Asia really mean? Dr. Tom Houston gave us some kind of idea as to what we are talking about. I have heard somebody saying that Asia has about 15% of the land mass of the world and 55% of the people of the world. India has a small place

when you look at Asia on the map but it has nearly 900 million people. It is more than all the countries of Africa or all the countries of North America, Latin America, and Central America put together. Take a balance. Place on one side of the balance little India; place on the other side every single country of Asia and add every country of Central America, every country of the continent of Latin America and North America. India will weigh more than all of them. We are talking about people, we are talking about all Asia to be reached where all the religions and resistance, and where all the poverty and suffering can be found. That is what we are talking about.

But how will Asia hear? Of course, we can develop strategy and encourage many missions. More missionaries can be sent out. But finally, unless all of us who are called after the name of Christ become a missionary, Asia will not hear. It was significant that ALCOE II in 1987 took as our theme, the local church. I want to speak on that tonight. I know the majority of us work with para-church organisations and may be theological colleges, seminaries and missionary organisations. We must realise that it is only when every Christian who sits in the pew of a simple local church, becomes a missionary, will all Asia hear.

An excellent model of a local church as a missionary church is the church at Thessalonica. It was small, like most of our churches. I am not talking about some of the big churches in South Korea. Take an average church in Bangladesh, Japan, India - we are small. Many of us are struggling. Many of us are facing opposition and a number of churches are going through suffering. Such was the local church in Thessalonica. Let me read the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians: *Paul, Silas and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. We always thank God for all of you mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our Gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering you wel-*

comed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia - your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we need not say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell us how you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead - Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath.

This was Paul's very first letter. Probably this is the simplest and the most personal of all his letters. Though it is not theologically profound like the letter to the Romans, it has no particularly exciting controversy like in Galatians. A small local church and Paul, as a kind of a pastor, is writing a letter. Thessalonica, a very interesting city, was one of the greater cities of the Roman period, the capital city of Macedonia and named after Thessalonica, a half sister of Alexander the Great. It was a flourishing city for over 300 years before Paul. A communication centre for the Roman world, a naval base, a shipyard, and Roman highways from East to West passed through there. The Asians considered it as the gateway to Europe. That was where Paul planted this church. How did the church start?

Acts 17 tells us how Paul and Silas were there for three Sabbaths, up to a maximum of three weeks, a fairly short time compared to the time he spent elsewhere and many places but a fairly successful time. The report says how a number of Jews and many Greeks believed and among them were several prominent women. But the Jewish leaders became very jealous, and the record says that they rounded up bad characters from the market place and started a riot. Jason, who was the host of Paul, was dragged out and finally brought to the court. You remember how Paul and Silas were literally smuggled out of Thessalonica in the middle of the night. That was the beginning of the church and Paul would run and run. Did he do anything like that anywhere else? He would run and by the third city, where he stopped, he began to wonder about those Christians back there in Thessalonica, and he was worried about the new believers there. He, personally, did not teach them or establish them until he sent Timothy. Timothy, he said, you go back and find out what happened, and Timothy would

come back with great news - very encouraging news. Paul, he said, "they are a great gang, there is a great church there." That is the occasion for this letter.

It was crucially important for Paul to have at this very important crossroads of the nations, Thessalonica, a strong church, and he was happy when the people turned out to be a dynamic church. There are three descriptions about this church, or we could even add a fourth, and I want us to think very briefly of these four descriptions that should be true to all faithful local churches. First, how they received the Gospel. Second, how they lived the Gospel. Third, how they witnessed to the Gospels. And, Fourth, how they waited. The Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. They waited for it.

How did they receive the Gospel? Paul says in verse 4, "God has chosen you." This is one of the crucial differences between Christianity and other religions. How do we finally find God? How do we find the answer that we are seeking? Here we are talking about a God who takes initiative in coming and in choosing us. We do not go after and hunt for him. We believe in a God who reaches out for us. We need to respond to him. The same chapter says, "you turned to God leaving the idols." We need to have that kind of a response. We cannot simply give statistics that in the world there are 33% Christians and look at all the others to be reached. We must remember that very often in our explanation, we assume those who call themselves Christians are Christians, and we have no urgency in reaching them. If I read the Bible correctly there is a greater judgement for the villages near Capernaum and Nazareth, a greater judgement than for Sodom and Gomorrah. Just because people are born as Christians, they are not necessarily Christians and our people ought to learn this.

We are living at a time when there are many words associated with the Gospel: songs of praise, sermons and conferences, lectures, books - and some of us sitting here have complicated the picture by producing more books. The Gospel is not a set of ideas, a set of doctrines or teachings about Jesus. It is not just a doctrinal statement. It is not a carefully worded seven or eight-phrase statement of faith that we sign. That is not what Gospel is. Paul would say that the Gospel is an operation of power. Excellence of the Gospel is not the quality of our eloquence. It is power. It is availability of power over very bad cir-

cumstances, over defeats, over personal sins, over evil powers, over suffering, over temptations. How many times have you seen people working under the hot sun with their crude physical power, crushing rocks, digging wells, pulling great weight, while over their head would be these high powered cables. If only there was some way to hook up to that power and make use of that power. Now this is exactly what happens with respect to Gospel. There is so much power all around us. Often we just labour, live in our own expertise, in our own intelligence, in our own experience, and in our willpower when there is so much power in the Gospel. Then the Gospel came, not just in words but with power.

The verse continues to say, with the Holy Spirit. Now Holy Spirit has become a subject of controversy in evangelical circles because some segments of our church talk about it a lot and develop perhaps certain particular types of theories about the Holy Spirit that we don't agree with. I remember in Manila too that this was one of the most difficult things that we had to handle. We are scared to talk about it or write about it. But the Holy Spirit is the secret of power, isn't that correct? We increasingly become aware in Asia about the secret of power in evangelism, but also increasingly aware about demonic power - the power of the devil and the encounter that we have to make with the demonic. There is something like a cosmic spiritual battle going on; I think we should take it much more seriously. We need the Holy Spirit for our own power, the Holy Spirit for our strength to face all the opposing power.

Again Paul says, "you receive the Gospel with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction." What is conviction? How do we define conviction? Conviction is something we are really sold on. Now we may have wrong conviction or right conviction. I come from a country where two of our Prime Ministers had been assassinated by terrorists. Her own bodyguards shot Indira Gandhi. They knew exactly what was going to happen. They did try to escape, but they knew they could not escape, but they had a kind of conviction. That conviction was strong and more important than their life. A woman planted a bomb on her body and killed herself so that she could kill Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister. She had certain convictions. The Gospel should come to us with deep conviction. The Gospel is just not a nice idea. It

is not some kind of a peace within us, some kind of a good feeling; it should be conviction, something that rules us, drives us, and radically changes us. Jeremiah, when he was filled with the word of God, tried to fight it; tried to fight the power of the Word in him. But he could not and he says how the Word of God was in him, within his bones, in such a way that he could not contain it. And he said, "I'm like a drunken man, I've no control of myself while the word of God has control." The Gospel comes with conviction to a group of Christians in an extremely difficult situation. That is the way they received the Gospel. It was not a comfortable, nice idea.

They not only received the Gospel; they lived the Gospel. Verse 3 would explain this in terms of these three commonly related words: Faith, Love, and Hope. Now that verse would essentially say, your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love and your endurance inspired by hope. Now what does it say? That verse says that the Thessalonian Christians, as they received the Gospel, became an embodiment of the Gospel. They became the clearest vision of what an authentic Gospel is. People could look at them and say, "Ah, that's the Gospel of Jesus Christ." It's a visible form of the Gospel, an incarnation of the Gospel. The lives of the simple Christians: that is a Gospel proclamation. They lived the Gospel.

Now, about work produced by faith. Paul will have no difficulty with James; he would agree with James who says that faith without work is dead. There is no distinction between these two. Faith is a guiding force and the incentive for work in one's life. Our relationship with God should express itself in the way we live and in our commitment to Christ. It should show that we have thrown ourselves in the hands of God. Our trust, our faith is expressed in the way we live. Our unreserved commitment to God as a person and his cause becomes central to the way we live and also to me this would mean that our faith should be put into practice, into practical living. If we believe that God is omnipresent, that should show the way we do our business, handle our money, and how we treat our neighbours. Wherever we are, whatever we do, our faith that God is omnipresent should be put into practice. God is present; it is not a theory.

I remember a theological teacher from Latin America telling me about a class he was teaching about God's omnipresence and omnipo-

tence. Just for the fun of it, he placed high currency notes in several rooms to see whether somebody would pick them up and report the finding. After hearing all the lectures about God's omnipresence, the dollar notes disappeared. You see, when nobody was looking, a theological student easily took a \$100 bill after hearing a lecture about the omnipresence of God. Our faith should be lived. If we believe that the word of God is true, we must put into practice in our lives.

Next, labour prompted by love. We often talk about the labour of love. Love is not very fussy. Love is not non-hate. Love is not non-hurting. Love is something positive, something that reaches out, and something that gives itself. Powerful - love that gives itself even when there is nothing in return. More and more we as evangelicals, are engaged in relief work, rehabilitation work, and development work. Often this kind of work is done among people from whom we don't get any return. But that's exactly what is expected, isn't it? Christ's love becoming the centre in serving people who are in need.

Then hope, endurance inspired by hope. Today the word 'hope' is used to express an element of doubt. When we say, "I do hope it doesn't rain," it means, "I think it is going to rain." So the word hope is used exactly in the opposite sense. But in the Bible, hope is something dynamic. It is very positive. The central characteristic of Christian faith is an assurance of the conclusive climax of Christ's victory. That is the centre of our hope. That is the very centre of our faith. That hope should guide the way we live today. As we look back at today and the way we live our lifestyle of today, our life should be in accordance with the conclusive victory of Christ. That is what hope is.

Now you must have played with jig-saw puzzles. How do you put them together? You have a completed picture on the cover of the box. You keep the box out there and look at that and put the pieces together. That's hope. What is the completed picture? You look at the world today, a jigsaw puzzle. Look at Asia. Look at our own countries. Hopeless, broken and shattered into pieces and if we have any sense, if we use any logic, it is a hopeless situation. But remember the completed picture; we must put our hope in that and witness today, live today, shout today, sing today, serve today, ask if we belong to the victory march. Right in the thick of battle, when his head had a price on it and when he could die at any time, Martin Luther could sing,

“Though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo us; we will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us; and he must win the battle.”

This chapter goes on to talk about another aspect of their style of living: they faced suffering. This talks about how they received the Gospel with joy, in spite of suffering. Suffering is on the increase in the world. Suffering has always been with the church and this has been true throughout the history, from the very beginning. If we really look at the whole picture, I believe the suffering of the church and persecution of the church is on the increase. Over the last few years I used to follow David Barret's one page statistics that he published and I took them for distribution in my class. A few years ago, he added another column, the number of martyrs. For every year in the world. Look at it. It's increasing. Probably over 60% of the Christians in the world live with some measure of restraint or restriction upon them. That's the kind of world we live.

Three Sundays ago I attended a church in Cambodia, what they used to call Kampuchea. There were about 100 people in the church. It was a humble little church and I asked the one who was translating every sentence for me, “Can you tell me how many of these people lost a dear one just during the last 10 to 15 years under the Khmer Rouge?” He took his time to look through all those pews and he said, “Everyone sitting here had lost several close ones, dear ones, during the purge.” Here they are, sitting together and the preacher has a sermon about suffering. How do we face suffering? The preacher said our model is Christ crucified. He offered his back to those who beat him and his cheeks to those who pulled out hair. He said Jesus could have called out angels to fight for him, Jesus could have disappeared. He did not. He stood there and he suffered. He took upon himself the suffering; he is our model.

Perhaps it is the same picture for us in Pakistan, or for those of us in Bangladesh, or in many, many other parts of Asia. When we analyse all of this, we are fools to keep on going. So were the early Christians. But the only strength that we have is that completed picture and Luther's word that we will not fear. For the truth must triumph. You know the conclusion. The battle is already won. We belong to the victory march. They not only received the Gospel, they not only lived it, but

they witnessed to the Gospel. They lived in the power of the Gospel that became a great witness. They were faithful stewards of the Gospel.

Now verse 8 says that the message of God, the Lord's message, rang out from you not only in Macedonia, but your faith is known everywhere. I wonder how they witnessed. Their faith moved out and was well known in the whole area. Several damaging notions about witnessing have come lately into our churches. One is that witnessing is the work of the professionals. An average person sitting in the pew would say, “Well this is the work of my Pastor.” And I sit back. Well I don't have any theological training. I don't have any skill. I know so little about the Bible and therefore my part is for prayer support and it is the professionals who should do it. This is the kind of thinking that has gone into all our churches. That was not true with the Thessalonians. Everyone who became hooked on Jesus, on the Gospel, was under the power of the Gospel and became a witness. Therefore we should teach our people, and we should make that common thinking in Asia, that the work of evangelisation is the work of every Christian.

Many people say we pray for evangelism. We should continue to pray but prayer should not take the place of actually doing of the work. We need to be involved. Many of our people think that the giving of financial support is enough and they give faithfully. I heard three people arguing as to who gives most - a Jew, a Roman Catholic and a Protestant. The Jew said, “At the end of the month when I get my salary, I am very strict. I give my tithe strictly - 1/10th. I never touch it. I give it to God.” The Roman Catholic said, “Aha, I do better than that. I not only give my tithe, but for the rest of the money, I draw a circle around me and then throw all the money up and anything that falls outside the circle I give to God. Only what comes within the circle, I take for myself.” The Protestant, not to be outdone, said, “I also throw the money up and say, “God, take what comes up, but what falls on the ground, I take.” Now many of us brag about giving. But what we really do is to give some kind of a satisfaction to our conscience saying that we have done our part. Am I not right that an average Christian in a local church would think that way?

Praying and giving. That's enough? No, that's not enough. Giving is not a substitute for getting involved, for really being a witness. We

are all lights of the world. We are lights and nobody can shine his light by proxy. We must teach that to every Christian. You can't ask somebody else to shine your light. All of us ought to get into the job now. Thessalonian Christians didn't have trained leaders, no theological seminaries, no security, probably no buildings, and no revolving funds, nothing. When they belong to God, they receive the call to serve him. Therefore in the work place, in schools, colleges, everywhere where a Christian is, he should stand for justice, he should stand for love and be a witness by word and by life, a witness to God.

There is another wrong notion that Christian work is all about winning souls, and somehow getting them ready for heaven. It's more like a spiritual ministry. Is it not true that we often discuss this question of what should be our priority and what is the relationship between evangelism and social action? You know all the struggles that we sometimes go through to sort things out. Definitely, the central concern of the Gospel is our inner reconciliation with God, but the Gospel doesn't stop there. The Gospel, as we first come across the word Gospel in the New Testament, is the Gospel of the kingdom of God. It is the Gospel of his rule. God rules our inside, our spiritual life, our physical life, our material world, our individual life, our corporate life, our soul, heart, mind. We cannot make any distinctions between where God does and does not rule. God wants to have all and everything and that is the purpose of the kingdom. When we pray and say let your kingdom come, we are saying that we want God's rule to be established. And if Christ comes suddenly to you, to me, to our community, to our nation, and if he has all the authority to straighten out things, my goodness, what a traumatic thing that would be, what a revolutionary thing that would be. But he has a concern for the total aspect of our lives. Now and then we debate among evangelicals about social service, social concerns, or evangelism. We agree that there would be some social concern. We should do some good work, but evangelistic witness and compassionate service should always go together. Only our service, love, our compassion, or identification with suffering gives credibility to the Gospel. It is our words and our proclamation that gives clarity to the Gospel. And this credibility and clarity aspect should always go together. We must love, and the love must be expressed in the way we live and serve. I don't think that Christ Jesus, when he was on earth, would arise every morning and

wondered if today is for social concern or evangelism. He just gave himself. He was just himself and he loved and he had no question of priority.

The way they lived, the labour of love, their work of faith and the way they totally gave was such a powerful witness for the Gospel that they became a good example. Many of us think that the work of God is somewhere out there. Many churches never think of their immediate surrounding, their locality. They are always thinking of something far away, conveniently far away. The challenge of the evangelistic work, as in North America, always uses such phrases as the unreached people out there, the hidden people out there. They have so many kinds of clichés by which they will say we will give and we will pray and all of that; they never think of people, right or wrong. To me, more serious than the hidden people are the hardened people. Again Sodom and Gomorrah over against Capernaum and villages around. So none of us can escape; none of our church people can escape. No local church can escape from the responsibility of doing activities immediately around themselves and if they talk about something far away, that is pure escapism from the challenge of the Gospel.

There is a fourth aspect of the Gospel. They not only received the Gospel, they not only witnessed to it, they went to look for the coming of the Son - the coming of the Son from heaven. We know that the kingdom is the Second Coming of the Lord. Many liberal people laugh at the notion, to them it's such a silly idea: Christ coming back in a personal way to consummate his kingdom. And we evangelicals spending a lot of energy fighting among ourselves over some details about his coming and the signs that precede his coming. Satan keeps us very busy in interpreting certain aspects of revelation, such as the Book of Daniel. But you see this is how we look at his coming. Our faith, the centre of our faith is our confidence that Christ is coming. This faith gives us joy in our difficulties, this gives us courage when we are opposed. And the Second Coming of our Lord is the rationale and the reason for our evangelism. The final victory is the consummation of the kingdom and that gives us strength and stamina and confidence and back-bone and courage to go on.

These are the Thessalonian Christians, and I find in them all the three key words that were theme words in Lausanne II in Manila. You

remember those sub-titles for the theme for the Conference: the whole world. Of course, their faith reached everywhere. The whole Gospel. Of course, they shared by the way they lived, loved, and served. The whole church. Paul writes as if everyone was engaged in it - the whole church was involved. And the Thessalonian church was just like our local church. Very small. A group discriminated against. A group persecuted, without any trained pastors, funds, finance, or anything. But they had a deep compelling burden to be God's witnesses. Why is it that our churches do not have that burden, that restlessness? Why is it that our local churches have totally left it to a specialist group to evangelise? Our local churches may worship faithfully, they may have services, but they do not do the job of shining their light. And it will be our prayer and effort that we will teach in all what we do as ALCOE, as leaders of organisations. Finally, it comes to every follower of Jesus, every disciple of Jesus in the way he or she shows that light, and that light becomes the convincing reason.

A friend of mine sent a questionnaire to all the Brahmin converts in India in connection with his master's thesis - a detailed 2-page questionnaire. There are not many like that and you well know that among all the Hindus, Brahmins, or among all the resistant people, Brahmins are some of the toughest. And they fight, they openly fight against the Gospel, burn the Bible. They know the Bible well, but they fight it. Yet, we have a number of Brahmin converts. Actually there are two of them in my Seminary now. But anyway, my friend contacted a number of them and gave a questionnaire. One of the questions asked was: After all the resistance you must have given to the Gospel, what is that finally convinced you that the Gospel might be good and made a difference in your turning to be sympathetic, to understand. Nine out of ten said that it was when their own servants, who belong to low castes, became Christians, that they became different people. And they want to find out what it is. That is how they came to the Lord. God uses all, but what God wants most is a large number of simple Christians who are nobodies so that God can use them. That is the only hope Asia has. Amen.

COOPERATION AND UNITY IN EVANGELISATION

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 54: 1 -10

Dr Tom Houston

I would like to thank Dr. Cho for his kind words of welcome. I am the third speaker tonight on whom the Lord needs to have mercy, as Athyal said last night. But I also realise the committee gave me a very substantial subject on which to speak: *Co-operation and Unity in Evangelisation*. This is also the last meeting of your conference and it really takes more time to deal with the substance of your subject. I have tried to discharge my responsibility both to speak at the final gathering now and to give you the substance that I think needs to be looked at for this subject.

This year it will be 200 years since William Carey set sail from London for India and began the Anglo-Saxon modern missionary movement. The Germans had been in it before and of course all nations have been at it ever since Christ was here. So I want to treat the subject of *Co-operation and Unity in Evangelisation* from the same passage that William Carey used in his great sermon that moved the Baptists to new action. The title of his sermon was this: "*Expect Great Things from God and Attempt Great Things for God.*" Please note the order. It is often quoted the wrong way round. We should not attempt great things for God and then expect great things from God. We need to start by looking to the Lord, finding out what his plans are and then being bold in our attempt to carry out these great things.

The text William Carey used on that occasion was from Isaiah 54:2 that we read a moment ago: "*Enlarge the place of your tent; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes.*" In my Good News Bible, "Make the tent you live in larger, lengthen its ropes and strengthen the pegs." This was the word intended for the Jews who had settled down comfortably in Babylon. They had not originally chosen to come to this country. They had been deported there in large numbers as a result of a war they had lost, and their country was being occupied by an imperial power. Those who had to face the challenge that Isaiah presented were the children and then, in some cases, the grandchildren of the people who had been brought to Babylon by force. The evidence